

R 291232Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9888

UNCLAS COLOMBO 000471

DS/IP, DS/ITA, DS/CC, DS/IP/SCA AND SCA/INSB

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC PTER

SUBJECT: PEACEFUL ANTI-US DEMONSTRATION AT AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

¶11. On Wednesday April 29, 2009, at approximately 1030 hr., a group of five men, dressed as Buddhist monks and claiming to represent the "Jana Setha Pandanama" (People's Service Foundation), came to U.S. Embassy Colombo to deliver documents and requested that the Embassy pass the documents to President Obama. The letter asked the United States to garner support in the international world to support the Government of Sri Lanka and to stop assisting the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, or Tamil Tigers). POL chief accepted the letter on behalf of the Embassy. Janaseta PERAMUNA, the individual who delivered the letter, also handed over a rejected U.S. visa application. PERAMUNA asked that that the Embassy pass his application to President Obama for review and an explanation as to why it was rejected.

¶12. According to RSO sources, PERAMUNA is a close friend of the Sri Lanka's President and a local Colombo business man. Police escorted the group of five men, who represented a larger group of approximately 40 to 50 demonstrators, which the police had prevented from entering the high security zone (per police security protocol). The group dispersed at approximately 1115 hr., once the five representatives returned and confirmed that Embassy had accepted the letter.

¶13. Meanwhile, a larger group peacefully demonstrated at the High Commission of the United Kingdom. This group, approximately 150 in number, was composed of many different pro-Sri Lanka government factions and carried signs calling on the U.S., the U.K., and the United Nations to stop assisting the LTTE and to support the host government in the fight against the Tamil Tigers. Immediately prior to demonstrating in front of the U.K. High Commission, this same group had demonstrated in front of the French Embassy.

¶14. RSO Colombo received no reports of violence or threatening incidents associated with the demonstrations. Local police support was positive and sufficient for the number of people involved.

¶15. Point of contact for this message is ARSO Aaron LaFortune. ARSO may be contacted via telephone at (94-11-249-8500) during business hours, or at (94-11-249-8888) Post 1 after business hours.

MOORE